

THE LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA



THE COLLECTION OF
NORTH CAROLINIANA

C278
UK3
1831G

UNIVERSITY OF N.C. AT CHAPEL HILL



00036720511

**This book must not
be taken from the
Library building.**

--	--	--

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY UPON THE WELFARE
OF NATIONS.

AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED AT

CHAPEL-HILL,

On Wednesday, June 22, 1831, the day preceding Commencement at the
University of North-Carolina,

ACCORDING TO

THE ANNUAL APPOINTMENT

OF

THE TWO LITERARY SOCIETIES

BELONGING TO THE

UNIVERSITY.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM MERCER GREEN.

HILLSBOROUGH:

PRINTED BY DENNIS HEARTT.

1831.

AN ORATION.



YOUNG GENTLEMEN:

IN entering upon the duties which your partiality, I fear, rather than your sober discretion, has assigned me, permit me, at the same time that I thank you for this undeserved distinction, to bespeak at your hands that charitable judgment which is the usual attendant as well as the brightest ornament of enlightened minds. Let me hope, also, that you will sustain me in the assurance now given to this respected audience, that the distinguished honour of being your speaker on this occasion was not only unsought but even deprecated by me; and that too, neither from unwillingness to serve you, nor from that vain show of modesty which courts solicitation whilst it would seem to shun it; but from the hearty desire of having due honour paid to your annual appointments, and from the unpretending consciousness of my insufficiency for the task.

But a few years have intervened since your speaker, like yourselves, was a tenant of these classic walls. The period of his acquaintance with the world has therefore been too brief to qualify him for the part of your sage adviser; his manner of life has been too much estranged from the din of political contention to furnish him with any of its spirit-stirring themes; and his attention too closely restricted to the sober contemplation of divine things, to enable him to entertain you, at this time, with either the flowers of fancy, the rich treasures of general science, the studied phrases of the dialectician, or the harmonious periods of showy rhetoric.

The subject selected for your consideration, though of somewhat serious aspect, is nevertheless replete with interest to the patriot and philanthropist no less than to the christian—**THE INFLUENCE OF REVELATION ON THE WELFARE OF NATIONS.**

If in thus consulting your profit more than your momentary entertainment, I have chosen a theme which, on the first announcement, may appear better suited to the sacred desk than the literary rostrum, let me find my excuse in the importance of the subject itself, in the spirit of the present age, and in the obligations of my holy calling. And let me hope also, that the time is happily gone by when such a subject, on an occasion like the present, would have met with the jeer and scoffing of not only the youth who are here in training, but also of their superiors in age, who honour with their presence the annual exercises of this institution.

The position, then, which I shall seek to establish, is this—that the religion of the Bible is the highest ornament and the surest safeguard of national prosperity.

It is one of the infirmities of our nature, to undervalue our blessings in exact proportion to the extent and continuance of their enjoyment. And this weakness (if it deserve no harsher name) extends not only to the sun and air, and other elements by which we are daily held in being, but even to the more marked providences of plenty, peace, liberty and religion. Accustomed as we have been from our infancy to a state of peace and security, and surrounded by every blessing that can render life desirable; instead of feeling oppressed by a sense of these daily mercies, we are prone to forget our dependance upon the hand of God, and to look upon all that we enjoy as our own underived and inalienable right. To cure us of this folly, to instruct us in the true secret of our national happiness, and to teach us a lesson of fervent gratitude to the Giver of all good, it will only be necessary to contrast the present condition of

our beloved country with that of the most highly favoured nations of either ancient or modern Paganism.

On taking up the map of the world, and casting our eyes over the many kindred and people that inhabit it, we cannot but rest with exultation on that happy spot which we are privileged to call our native home. But whilst indulging in this pardonable pride, and losing ourselves in fond anticipations of our future glory, it becomes us, as enlightened patriots who desire that our nation's prosperity may be as durable as it is pre-eminent, to inquire, what it is that makes us to differ from other nations. Is it the extent of our borders? the salubrity of our climate? the magnitude of our rivers? the capaciousness of our harbours? or the fertility of our soil? Can we find in any or even all of these natural advantages, an adequate cause for the unrivalled blessings we enjoy? Can these sufficiently account for the excellency of our political institutions, our literary privileges, our freedom of speech, our equality of rights, and the acknowledged wholesomeness of our laws? No: other nations as well as this can boast a genial soil, a temperate sky, extensive domains, and every facility for successful commerce, yet are most of them far behind us in the enjoyment of those higher privileges which chiefly constitute a nation's happiness. What then is the mighty secret of our prosperity? It is, in the opinion of your speaker, because we are a God-fearing people; because we enjoy the pure light of revelation, and are blessed with the unspeakable privilege of serving God according to the dictates of enlightened reason, and the holy precepts of his written word. To become convinced of this, we will now proceed to examine the beneficial effects which the religion of the gospel has ever exerted on the welfare of nations.

To do justice to this inquiry, it will be necessary to take a brief survey of the state of society, both moral and civil, in the Heathen world, before the advent of the Son of God, that we may the better contrast it with the condition

of those countries in the present day which are blessed with the light of revelation. And in doing this, it will not be necessary to select those nations of ancient times which were ever of a barbarous and untameable character; neither will we confine our views to any one unfavourable era of the heathen world; but we will fearlessly take the republics of Greece and Rome, even in their proudest days, as just samples of the utmost limit to which a people's happiness may be extended without the knowledge of God's revealed will.

It is usual with the young to kindle at the least mention of those far-famed republics, and to associate with their names all that is great in valour, or honourable in virtue; therefore the task of dispelling this pleasing illusion, and of portraying these people in their true moral colours, is an unpleasant one at all times, but especially on the present occasion, when your speaker stands before so many young and enthusiastic minds who have, as it were, just risen from the contemplation of their stubborn virtues and martial achievements. But however ardently the bosom of our youth may respond to such a theme, it is all-important to them to know the utterly corrupt state of these people, even at the very time when their public virtues shone the brightest, their arms were most successful, and their literature most distinguished.

What was there, then, in the morality of ancient Paganism, to promote the individual happiness of man, or the general well-being of society? Their mythology was nothing but a compound of jarrings, thefts, robberies, rapes, incest, and drunkenness; their religious rites were stained with obscenity and blood; and their general code of morals (if any code they had) was a just counterpart to a worship so impure. Whilst some of their philosophers asserted the being of a God, an equal number denied it, and others again believed in gods terrestrial, aerial, celestial, and infernal. Whilst a few of their wisest men conjectured that

this earth might be the work of some creating hand, a far greater number held that it was self-made, that it existed from all eternity, or that it sprung from a fortuitous concourse of atoms. The consequence of these discordant sentiments were the grossest polytheism and idolatry. Both dead and living persons were deified. Temples were erected to all the passions, diseases, fears and evils to which the human family is liable. Enlightened Athens, in the zenith of her renown, was so filled with the statues of these imaginary deities, that it became a common saying, "*In Athens it is easier to find a god than a man.*" Imperial Rome too, when mistress of the world in arms, and arts, and letters, crowded into her capitol all the gods that were worshipped by the various nations tributary to her power. Such was the theology of these boasted republics. Nor were they less ignorant of all other things that constitute true happiness and the chief good of man. They knew not the true origin of evil; and although the more reflecting among them could not shut their eyes to the depraved condition of man, yet they could neither stay its course, nor divine its cause. Equally ignorant were they of any method ordained of Heaven, by which God and man could be reconciled, and the pardon and blessedness of the one made consistent with the holiness and justice of the other. The light of nature was sufficient to show them their lost estate, but not the *great Restorer* provided for it. Of the *mercy* of God they could learn nothing from the book of Providence. Inexorable justice faced them wherever they turned, and made their whole system one of hopeless, anxious, endless solicitude. They knew nothing of the all-powerful help of divine grace in the performance of duty. They entertained but crude and imperfect ideas of the providence of God, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and of a future state of reward and punishment. Whenever conjecture would push her adventurous wing into any of these unknown regions, instead of returning with the

olive of light and peace, she could only report a land of "shadows, clouds, and darkness." Who can repress the starting tear on hearing one of their poets thus feelingly lament the uncertain doom of man beyond the grave?

"Alas! the tender herbs and flowery tribes,
 Though crush'd by winter's unrelenting hand,
 Revive and rise when vernal zephyrs call;
 But we, the brave, the mighty and the wise,
 Bloom, flourish, fade and fall—and then succeeds
 A long, long, silent, dark, oblivious sleep;
 A sleep which no propitious power dispels."

From this uncertainty concerning these great and fundamental truths, what could be expected but the most pernicious effects, both in principle and in practice. From ignorance of the ways of Providence, they were led to call in question the goodness and justice of God, whenever they saw the wicked prosperous and the righteous in trouble. Without the belief of a future state of retribution, there was nothing to check the mad career of human passion, to encourage the virtuous under misfortune, or to put a difference between good and evil; and the unavoidable consequence was an erroneous standard of morals among all classes. The blessedness of loving an enemy and forgiving an offending brother, was a stranger to their bosoms. On the contrary, revenge was both commended and inculcated as a virtue. (Witness the Carthaginian General, leading his infant son to the altar and binding down his soul under an oath of everlasting hatred to the Romans.) Pride, and the love of applause, the one the most hateful, and the other the most soul-destroying principle of our nature, were their chief incentives to virtue. Self-murder was esteemed the highest proof of heroism. Theft was scarcely regarded as a crime, provided it were successfully concealed. Falsehood was allowed, whenever profit or convenience required it. Maimed infancy and decrepid old age were devoted to certain destruction. Traffic in human blood was unblushingly practised. To masters was given the power

of life and death over their slaves. The wife and the child were placed at the mercy of the husband and the father. The poor and destitute were turned over to famine and the pitiless elements. Profane swearing was inculcated by the precept and practice of their purest moralists. And libidinous and unnatural gratifications were sanctioned by example and by law. Such were the vices to which even the wiser and better part of ancient heathenism was addicted; whilst to name the abominations practised among the less-informed classes would wound the ear of indelicacy itself.

Nor were their religious rites less at war with the true interests and the refined feelings of the soul. The sports and spectacles of their imaginary deities cost the human family a greater annual sacrifice of life than would now be required for the necessary self-defence of the whole christian world. The altars of Diana were honoured with the lacerated flesh, and oftentimes the murdered bodies of children. The festivals of Bacchus were celebrated with drunken excesses, and disgusting gestures of lewdness, fury and madness. The Lupercalia of Pan were observed with the most impure and indecent rites. The priestesses of their temples were the very worst of their sex. Every offering laid upon the shrine of Venus was at the expense of decency, chastity, and nature itself. And as to their "hidden mysteries," the highest boast of their religion, we dare not unveil their accursed abominations;—we can only say of them, in the language of inspiration, "it is a shame even to speak of those things which were done of them in secret."

I feel aware, my respected hearers, that this recital must grate upon your ears. Pardon me then, if, in my anxiety to do justice to my subject, I have, for a moment, permitted myself to forget what is due to refined feeling. And let me hope that these unpleasant truths will not be without the effect of setting before you the extravagance and madness to which the human heart is prone when unblessed with the knowledge of God and his holy worship.

If from the principles and practices of private life we turn to the rulers and national councils of ancient Heathenism, we shall find that there was something radically corrupt in all their political institutions, as well as in their notions of moral virtue. Their laws not being founded on the true principles of government, were generally ill-defined and conflicting, and therefore but little respected. No bond of union and mutual dependence existed between the rulers and the ruled. The one aimed, with boundless ambition, at the establishment of despotic power, whilst the other were consigned to the tyranny of ignorance, vice and superstition. Although a love of freedom, and the display of heroic patriotism, occasionally shine forth as bright spots upon the darker pages of their history, yet among the great mass of both rulers and people, and especially in their contests with other nations, there was but little regard paid to the rights of either justice or humanity. Their distinguished men were themselves the chief sources of distraction, jealousy and commotion in the state. Ingratitude towards their public benefactors distinguished the common people, and thus gave rise to the saying that "*Republics are ungrateful.*" Envy and hatred were sure to follow the possessor of extraordinary virtue; and ostracism and death were not unfrequently the reward of those who sought most zealously to reclaim society to the paths of honor and virtue. Dissension and civil broils at length subjected them to arbitrary rule; military despotism, borne on the shoulders of a riotous soldiery, usurped the seat of their short lived liberty; till at length luxury and effeminacy brought on the closing scene of feebleness and decay.

After this hurried review of the moral and political condition of the Heathen world, even in its best estate, we are now prepared to ask, and to receive an answer to the question, "What has christianity done towards promoting the happiness of nations?" But before replying to this interesting inquiry, let us first rapidly glance at the doctrines

and precepts of our holy religion, and consider how worthy they are of their divine Author, and how admirably adapted to meet the wants, and fulfil the high purposes of our being. We have seen the lamentable ignorance of even the most polished Heathen on the subject of morals, and the consequent ill effects of such spiritual darkness. Now on all these points, which to them were shrouded in obscurity, the gospel of Christ has shed the most abundant light. Over that chaos of corruption, disorder and thick darkness, it has poured the beams of eternal life, and thus put it into the power of the most ignorant disciple of the cross, nay even of lisping childhood itself, to boast of clearer and juster views of the divine nature, than ever entered into the sublimest conceptions of a Socrates, a Seneca, or a Cicero. To those who doubted whether there were ten gods or ten thousand, and who offered up at the foot of a lifeless statue the homage of the immortal mind, the gospel has revealed the *one true God*, as an eternal Spirit that is to be worshipped only in spirit and in truth; a Being of infinite power, wisdom, holiness, truth, justice and goodness; the only Creator and Sovereign of the world; the present witness and the future judge of all our actions. It also teaches us that we are fallen and guilty creatures, and places before our view *one* who is able to save us from our sins, to reconcile us to God, to restore us to holiness, and to fit us for an eternity of happiness beyond the grave. On the subject also of man's immortality, which was so doubtfully entertained by even the best and wisest of beathen philosophers, it opens up the awful scenes of a coming judgment, and sets before our hopes and our fears the eternal bliss and the unending torments of a world to come.

But however admirably adapted the *doctrines* of revelation may be to the fallen condition of mankind, its moral *precepts* will be found equally conducive to national and individual happiness. Unlike the ancient teachers of morality, who confined their instructions to a chosen few, and

taught their disciples by means of abstruse reasoning, general declarations, and cold and inanimate precepts, the gospel of Christ comes home to the business and the bosom of every man. It makes its demands upon every rank in society, and addresses itself with equal authority to the rich and the poor, the ignoble and the honourable. It pervades every thought and intent of the heart, strikes at the root of every selfish feeling, diffuses on all the most enlarged benevolence, and teaches us to refer our every thought and word and work to the will of God and the judgment of the last day.

“Pure Plato! how had thy chaste spirit hailed
A faith so fitted to thy moral sense!
What hadst thou felt, to see the fair romance
Of high imagination, the bright dream
Of thy pure fancy more than realized!
Oh! sweet enthusiast! thou hadst blessed a scheme
Fair, good and perfect. How had thy wrapt soul
Caught fire, and burnt with a diviner flame!
For even thy fair *idea* ne’er conceived
Such plenitude of love, such boundless bliss!”

We will now no longer delay to answer the demand,
‘What has the religion of the Bible done for the welfare of nations?’

In addressing the Corinthians while in the acme of their renown, an inspired writer furnishes us with this incidental testimony: “Be not deceived,” says he; “neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor idolaters, nor effeminate persons, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God;” he then adds, “*such* were some of you; but ye are now *washed*, ye are *sanctified*, ye are *justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of God.” Such was the renewing and purifying power of the gospel on the hearts and lives of the early believers. Abundant proof to this effect might be drawn from the sacred page, but let us call in a less suspected witness.

Hear then the testimony of one who, from being a celebrated teacher in the heathen schools, became an humble learner at the feet of Christ; I mean the venerable Lactantius. In addressing the enemies of the gospel on this very subject, he does not hesitate to use this strong language: "Give me a man that is passionate, abusive in his language, headstrong and unruly; with a very few words, the words of God, I will render him as gentle as a lamb. Give me a greedy, covetous, parsimonious man; and I will presently return him to you a generous creature, freely bestowing his money by handfuls. Give me a cruel and blood-thirsty man; instantly his ferocity shall be transformed into a truly mild and merciful disposition. Give me an unjust man, a foolish man, a sinful man; and on a sudden he shall become honest, wise and virtuous. And this benefit shall be conferred gratuitously, easily, expeditiously, provided the ears and the heart thirst after wisdom." He then demands of his opposers whether any of the heathen philosophers ever accomplished by their teaching such important ends as these.

But as the unintentional testimony of an enemy has ever been allowed to have much weight, we will next appeal to heathen writers themselves, who have incidentally furnished ample proof of the virtuous lives of the early christians. On looking into their accredited historians, we learn that it was a current saying among the people, "Such a one is a *good* man, but he is a christian." In accordance with this is the language of the younger Pliny, who, though frequently engaged in examining, and even in putting to death many of the early christians, yet unhesitatingly acknowledges that "they were guilty of no crime, except that of assembling together on a stated day, before light, to sing hymns to Christ as God, and of binding themselves by oath not to be guilty of theft, robbery or adultery, never to falsify their word, or deny a pledge committed to their keeping." And similar to this is the testimony of the emperor

Julian himself, the bitterest enemy that ever dipped his hands in the blood of God's saints. In writing to one of the heathen pontiffs at a distance from Rome, he enjoins him to "imitate the charities of the christians, their sanctity of life, and their kindness to enemies and strangers."

These involuntary proofs of the beneficial effects of Christianity on individual character, are abundantly supported by similar testimony to its benign influence on society generally. No sooner had the mild religion of the Son of God obtained a footing in the world, than its benevolent spirit became a bond of union between independent nations. The middle wall of partition, which had so long divided the Jewish and Gentile world, crumbled at its touch. Pride and revenge, those fertile sources of war and bloodshed, were supplanted by humility and forgiveness. Into every family it came a messenger of love, a dispenser of peace. It took by the hand the softer sex, and easing their shoulders of the onerous burdens that barbarous superstition had put upon them, lifted them from a degraded and servile state, and gave to them that equal rank in refined society to which they are justly entitled. The religion of Christ has abolished polygamy, and restricted the power of divorce. Unnatural crime has fled at its approach. The harshness of parental authority has been tempered by the mild precepts of the gospel; and instead of putting to death the old and the decrepit, and weak and deformed children, as was sanctioned by the laws of many heathen states, her benevolent genius has spread over these hapless members of the human family the ample ægis of the law, and erected asylums for their preservation and relief. The relations of husband and wife, and of parent and child, which formerly differed but little from that of master and slave, are now stripped of all unnecessary power. The poor and the ignorant have been taken under the patronage of the rich and enlightened. The prosperous have been taxed to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and heal the

afflicted. No matter what may be the form or the degree of human misery, the spirit of Christianity opens to its relief the hand of private benevolence and the munificent store-houses of public charity. The person of the slave is now not only brought under the protection of the law, but every engine that providence and a spirit of universal benevolence can approve, is at work to free the world from the very name of slavery. The heathen had no asylums for the sick, the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the foundling; nor was there a single hospital in all the ante-christian world. Now how changed is the scene! Christianity has erected houses of refuge for every grade and species of human suffering. It has established schools for the gratuitous instruction of the poor. It has penetrated into the noxious dungeon, and not only lighted its darkness with the lamp of eternal life, but placed within the reach of its wretched tenant every comfort that the strict claims of justice will allow. And in its course of expansive benevolence it has even descended to the care of inferior animals, by discountenancing every exercise of cruelty towards them, and by making their case and security a subject of legal enactment. Instead, then, of asking 'What has Christianity done?' we may demand 'What has it *not* done toward meliorating the condition of man?'

From its effects on society at large, let us now ascend to the influence of the religion of the Bible on the governments of states and nations. No sooner had it gained access to the palaces of kings and emperors, than its humane and benevolent spirit was breathed into all their political codes and institutions. Regicide suddenly ceased to be an every-day occurrence. Rebellion sunk to sleep under the potent wand of the gospel of peace. War laid aside half his horrors, and took with him to the field mercy and kindness to the vanquished. Ambition put a check upon his insatiable appetite; and revenge was driven to lay aside his vindictive spirit at the mild remonstrance of the gospel of

peace. What is it but the liberal spirit of Christianity that is now daily deposing the despot, and instructing the rulers of the earth to look for safety, honour and happiness for themselves, only in the safety, honour and happiness of every class of society beneath them? And what but this has tamed the fierceness of ancient barbarism, palsied the arm of arbitrary law, given to even-handed justice an almost universal triumph over bribery and favouritism, and thus secured to the meanest citizen the freedom, the justice, the ease and the security which the highest magistrate enjoys?

Nor should I, at this time, and before such an audience, fail to notice the beneficial effects of the gospel on the cause of science and literature, as well as on the moral and political condition of the world. The religion of Christ being a *written* revelation, and composed in several languages, its teachers, and all others who were desirous of embracing it, were thereby compelled to acquire a knowledge of letters. History accordingly shows, that wherever the christian faith has been received, there have followed in her train all the blessings of moral, classical and theological knowledge. Before her mild genius had established her sway in the world, it was the received opinion among heathen nations, that a knowledge of the sciences tended only to enervate the mind and unfit it for martial achievement; and that the boy who was taught to tremble at the rod, would never look undaunted on the sword or spear. But far different was the lesson inculcated by the religion of the gospel, and to its happy effects let the present assembly testify. To give some faint idea of the extreme ignorance of many of the nations of Europe before their reception of Christianity, I would point you to Germany and Ireland, the one renowned at the present day for its gigantic achievements in the field of science, and the other acknowledged to be the prolific parent of genius and oratory. When we contemplate their present rank in the world of letters, we can scarcely believe that these people were indebted for

even a knowledge of the alphabet to the zealous labours of the christian missionary. Yet such is the record of faithful history.

Nor did literature alone experience the aid of the gospel. Music, painting, sculpture, drawing and architecture felt likewise her fostering hand, being called in to beautify the temples of the Christian's God.

When in the middle ages the love of literature yielded to a passion for arms, and the whole of civilized Europe became one great war-camp, the only refuge to be found for science and the liberal arts was in the cloisters of the christian priesthood. And again, when in the sixteenth century the mind of man once more began to struggle from beneath the dominion of ignorance and superstition, it was the Bible that led the way in enlightening the minds, as well as reforming the hearts of men. It was the Bible that first knocked off the shackles of reason, and prepared the way for philosophy to display her splendid triumphs. If a Luther, a Melancthon, and a Cranmer had never lived, it is scarcely probable that the names of Bacon, Boyle, Newton and Locke would have been distinguished from the common mass at the present day.

If now we withdraw our attention from the histories of ancient times, and compare the condition of the nations of the present day which are blessed with the Bible, with that of others which are still groping in the darkness of heathenism, we shall at once be convinced, that for the knowledge of whatever is valuable in antiquity, in language, in chronology, history, morality, philosophy, metaphysics, jurisprudence, national law, and civil and religious freedom, we are indebted under God to the possession of his gospel. In one word, wherever the christian missionary has set his foot, there have ignorance and barbarism given way to useful knowledge and all the arts of civilized life. The ferocious savage, who lived on plunder, and prowled through his native forests, feeding like a beast of prey on the flesh

of his captive, has been transformed into a peaceful cultivator of the earth, a lover of domestic happiness, and a child of God. The cave and the wigwam of the barbarian, have been exchanged for abodes of comfort and refinement. The precarious supplies of the chase, have been abandoned in favour of the more certain and more humanizing pursuits of agriculture. The sanguinary rites of Druidism are now known only in history; and the institution of human sacrifice is fast fading from the earth.

But for the blessed knowledge of Jesus Christ, how different would have been the aspect of this assembly! Instead of meeting here to enjoy the feast of reason that is annually spread before us, we might this day have been convened to witness the terrific fightings of wild beasts, or the bloody shows of gladiatorial contention. This spot on which we stand might have contained the altar of some senseless idol, or the tripod of some lying oracle; and this hall, dedicated to the cause of liberal science, might have resounded with the raving and beastly worship of some impure demon. Instead of having the blessing of Jehovah invoked upon our present exercises, we might have been crying out with those of old. "O, Baal, hear us! O, Baal, hear us!" Instead of bringing your sons to this place to learn to walk in the ways of useful knowledge, you might at this moment have been dragging them from their youthful sports to burn them in the fires of Moloch, to whip them to death on the altar of Diana, or to cast them as a propitiatory sacrifice under the ponderous wheels of Juggernaut. And let me not forget to add, that but for the humanizing influence of the religion of Christ, those who sit here as our wives, our mothers, our daughters and our equals, might at this moment have been our "hewers of wood and drawers of water," our drudges, our menials, the very bond-slaves of our barbarian pleasures.

Lest, however, it should be supposed that these statements, because drawn from distant history are therefore

liable to much abatement, I will now direct your view to some interesting facts that have fallen within our own times. The present is, in a remarkable degree, an age of missionary enterprise. The whole christian world seems to be rousing itself to some mighty effort in the cause of God; and the remotest corners and most obscure islands of the earth are beginning to hail the dawn of gospel light. But in no quarter have the labours of the pious missionary been more amply blessed, than in the distant islands of the Pacific. There, and in our own day too, have whole tribes and nations, without the intervention of force, or the influence of any earthly potentate, been reclaimed from ignorance, idolatry and vice, to a rational and hearty profession of the christian faith. And what is the effect on their national and individual happiness? Idolatry, theft, lewdness, infanticide, human sacrifice, polygamy, cannibalism, and every species of abomination that was practised in their days of ignorance, are now suppressed. The arbitrary rule of despotic chieftains has been supplanted by a system of equitable law, adopted by the voluntary consent of both prince and people, and founded on the basis of christian principle. Civilization, industry and education are rapidly effacing the remembrance of their recent barbarism. The voice of public, social and private worship is universally lifted up to the Christian's God; and these reclaimed sons of superstition, are rapidly advancing in the march of mental improvement, as well as in the knowledge of the one true God and his Son Jesus Christ.

Having thus seen the salutary effects of the gospel of Christ on the interests of nations, let us, for a moment, change the scene, and contemplate a people madly throwing off its restraints, and placing themselves under the dominion of reason alone. That the sun has shone upon such a sight is, alas! too true; and there are some now present who can well remember how their ears were made to tingle and their hearts to melt within them, when the intelli-

gence came that a whole nation had renounced the God that made them, and were endeavouring to expel him from his own creation. It needs not be said that I here allude to revolutionary France—to that bloody period of her history when infidelity, for a time, held its undisputed sway; when the christian era was abolished, lifeless statues set up in the temples of the living God, death declared to be an eternal sleep, and the existence of a God an idle superstition; when all distinctions of right and wrong were confounded; when a proscription followed proscription in breathless succession, and misrule and atheism went hand in hand in converting the very garden of Europe into a field of blood; when a nation, distinguished for the refinements of polished life, became, as in a day, a horde of assassins, and every social and moral tie was burst asunder; when fathers denounced their children, wives their husbands, and mothers their sons; when a whole kingdom presented the awful spectacle of one great slaughter-house; and the sword, the bayonet, the sucking-boat and the guillotine aimed, in the person of man, to banish the image of God from the face of the earth. Such is the spirit of infidelity; such the tender-mercies of religion without revelation; such the history of a people without a God! Oh, what a lesson to the rulers of the earth! How closely should they lay it to heart; and how incontestably does it establish the words of inspiration, that it is “righteousness that exalteth a nation,” and that “sin is a reproach to any people!” If, then, the religion of Christ, when extended over only a fourth part of the habitable world, and not cordially embraced by the majority of any one people, has already done so much for the happiness of man, what may not be expected; nay, what stretch of imagination can take in the vast amount of blessing that will ensue, when, in the language of holy writ, “the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea?”

Need I stop here to notice the objections brought against the religion of the Bible, on account of the persecutions, religious wars and bitter controversies to which it has given rise? These are consequences for which our holy faith is not answerable. As well might we attribute to civil government the various wars and tumults it has occasioned; or to the spirit of liberty all the licentiousness and atrocity that have been practised in her name. For although these wars and persecutions may have had religion for their object, yet are they manifestly resolvable into principles which Christianity does not implant, but on the contrary, universally condemns. Did the Bible itself, as does the Koran, authorize coercion in the propagation of its principles, then might such objections have their weight; but when it is the professed aim of the gospel, and, I may safely add, its acknowledged tendency too, to break down and root out every principle of intolerance and contention from the heart, it should be freely confessed that our holy religion has been the occasion rather than the motive, the reluctant instrument instead of the willing author of evil to mankind. Wherever the malevolent passions hold the sway, there will follow persecution, violence, and every evil work; and the cause of virtue, and the mantle of charity, and the very name of God, will be assumed to sanction crimes against religion and even nature itself. Let not Christianity, therefore, suffer undeservedly for the evil passions of those who arrogate to themselves her name; neither let her purity be stained with the imputation of intolerance; for, as has been well observed, "among the awful lessons to be learned from the crimes and miseries of mankind, this is not the least, that in order to be a persecutor, it is not necessary to be a bigot; and that in rage and cruelty, in mischief and destruction, fanaticism itself can be outdone by infidelity."

Having said thus much of the beneficial effects of Christianity on the welfare of nations, and of society at large, but little time is left for noticing the vast aggregate of

happiness that it dispenses in the obscurity of private life. From the first preaching of the Baptist to the present day, there have been millions in every age, unknown to fame, who have rejoiced in its saving truths as in "a pearl of great price," and have found them to be productive of an inward peace and comfort of the heart, which the world can neither give nor take away. It is the peculiar glory of our religion that it is adapted to every rank and condition of life. Is the christian in prosperity? then has he a higher enjoyment of the good things of this life, than is felt by him who is a stranger to his God; for there is a heavenly temper given to him from above, which mixes its own sweetness with every earthly good he receives, and imparts to it a relish that savours as much of heaven as of earth. Is he in adversity? no untoward circumstance can ruffle the serenity of his soul. Like the heaven to which he aspires, he is exalted above the tumults and tempests of this lower world, and enjoys a sunshine which never warms or illumines the icy bosom of the unbeliever. In his deepest sorrows and his darkest hours, he has more joy than belongs to the brightest day of the sinner's life. In the secrecy of his chamber, and in the solemn silence of midnight, he has a resource that the world knows not of, and finds a hiding-place from his sufferings in the bosom of his God.

But it is in the prospect of futurity, that the blessed effects of the religion of Christ are peculiarly displayed. At that trying hour, when the soul is fluctuating between time and eternity, when the body is wrung with anguish, and conscience rouses from its deceitful slumbers, then the only balm that unbelief can impart is the cold and cheerless anticipation of an *eternal sleep*. But the Christian has a better and a brighter hope than this. He builds, upon the promises of an all-powerful and unchanging God, the certain assurance of another and a happier state. He knows that this mortal body, sown here in "corruption," "weakness" and "dishonour," will be raised beyond the tomb in "in-

corruption," in "power" and in "glory;" and that, enrolled among the pure intelligences of that happy place, he will enjoy a felicity which has no measure but the power of Omnipotence, no limit but the duration of eternity.

Thus, my friends, have I endeavoured to establish the position with which I set out, that the religion of the Bible is the highest ornament and best security of nations. If enough, and more than enough be not already said, this only will I add: Let an impartial observer take in his hand the map of the world; let him point to a nation locked up in barbarism and superstition, and, my life on it, that is a land where the Bible is unknown. Let another be designated as fast emerging from the rudeness of nature into the humanizing arts of civilized life, and there, doubtless, will be found the humble missionary, labouring and praying in secret, and sacrificing his health, his life, his all, to make known the glad tidings of salvation. Show me a people that, having been once enlightened and made free and happy by the influence of Revelation, have receded from their foremost rank among the nations of Christendom, and placed themselves once more under the dominion of superstition, ignorance, immorality and despotism; and although that may be called a christian people, yet it will be found that the word of God is there not permitted to have its free course, and that the "inventions of men" are taught for the commands of God. Finally, let a nation be pointed out where law is respected, where life and property are secure, where mutual confidence subsists between rulers and people, where order and peace hold their gentle sway, and where every one may sit under his own vine and fig-tree, there being none to make him afraid; show me such a people, and you show me "my own, my native land," where the Bible is in the hands of every man, where it is read and revered, and where the young are carefully instructed in its life-giving precepts.

We have heard much, of late, about the constitution of our beloved country; and our hearts have ardently responded to the soul-stirring eloquence of those who have called on us to rally around it as the palladium of our liberty. And long, long may it remain to these happy states a bond of union, a charter of mutual rights, a check upon usurping power on either hand. My young friends, you should study that instrument, and be familiar with its principles; but at the same time you should know, that it is to the influence of the religion of Christ we are indebted for the soundness of those principles, and their happy tendency to promote the welfare of our country. With the Bible in their hands and its precepts written on their hearts, it is impossible for a people to become the slaves of a tyrant, or to be otherwise than free and prosperous and happy. The spirit of liberty is inseparably allied to the spirit of sound religion; and the despot who has carefully studied the history of the last three centuries will tremble sooner for his ill-got power at seeing a Bible than a sword in the hands of his subjects; and yet there is not one word in that blessed book to call up a spirit of faction and disorder. Submission to rulers is there again and again inculcated, and that too upon grounds unknown to the lawgivers of the heathen world. Before the religion of Christ was admitted into the councils and senate-chambers of the earth, princes ruled by fear alone, and maintained their power, as they had acquired it, at the point of the sword. By day they walked abroad preceded by lictors, and all the instruments of sanguinary punishment; at night they pressed a sleepless pillow, guarded by the unsheathed weapons of a hireling soldiery. Now the principles of christianity engraven on the heart, are of more avail than bolts and chains, imperial edicts, or burning stakes. Now the spirit of religion is no less the ruler's safety than the people's happiness. Now the fear of God among his subjects is a more than triple shield to the breast of the sovereign. And the

chief magistrate of this happy nation may pass unarmed and unattended from one limit of our vast territory to the other, and meet with neither insult nor violence. O, happy people, that thus have the Lord for their God, and his word for their guide! In the contemplation of this subject, your speaker would fain adopt the sentiment of one who, though of another nation, is yet no less than ourselves the strenuous advocate of civil and religious freedom, and say, "my hope for my country is not built upon her fleets and armies, but upon the stronger ground of our being a praying people"—a people blessed with the word, the sabbaths, and the sanctuary of the Lord of hosts. Take these away, and wherein shall we be better than other nations? what shall we have to ensure permanency to our free institutions more than had ancient Greece or Rome? Is there a more enthusiastic love of liberty in our breast, or more muscle and bone in our arm than those ancient republicans could boast? No: take away the word and the worship of God from amongst us, and we shall fall before our feeblest foe; the strong bond that now unites us as one great family, will become as the spider's web; the mighty fabric of this glorious republic will sink under its own weight; and "*sic transit gloria*" be written on the ruins of our capitol, as well as on those of Babylon, Troy, Tyre and Carthage. But whilst we continue to be blessed with the saving truths and sacred institutions of christianity, we need entertain no fears for our liberty or happiness. The word of Heaven is pledged for our safety; the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Permit me then, my young friends, in concluding these remarks, to urge upon you as patriots, as enlightened men, as the rising hope of our country, to make the word of God your daily study, and to reverence and uphold the sacred institutions which it has established in our land. If there were no religious assemblies throughout our country, no sacred temples, no day set apart for divine worship, no

consecrated memorials of the being and dominion of a God, and of the accountability of man, the pillars of society would be undermined, public order and social happiness would cease from amongst us, and our land become as remarkable for lawless and ferocious violence, as it now is for the blessings of good order and peace. Remember, therefore, that he who reviles the word of God and treats sacred things with levity, is the worst enemy to society, a very Cataline in the bosom of the commonwealth. And remember also, that so far as our eternal interests are concerned, it is not the possession of religion by us as a nation that will avail to our happiness, either here or hereafter. We must feel a personal concern in its saving truths, and have an individual experience of its life-giving power in our hearts. before we can rejoice in God, or hope for his blessing either public or private.

If such be the tendency, such the blessed effects of christianity as have this day been set before you, can you desire a stronger proof that it is a revelation from heaven, or a louder call to interest yourselves in the reception and extension of its saving benefits? You have been shown the utter insufficiency of mere human wisdom, and have seen how far short all the lessons of ancient morality have fallen of promoting the happiness of man. As a further testimony on this subject, let me refer you to the recent language of one of the brightest luminaries of our country, who, though high in public estimation, is content to lay all his honours at the feet of Christ, believing with the poet that

"Christian is the highest style of man."

"Public virtue," says this learned jurist and polished writer, "has no solid basis but religion. Mere human virtue is a cheat, a scintillation at best, which we see continually extinguished by every temptation. Nothing less than a living conviction of an ever-present God, before

whom we are acting and thinking and speaking, and that we have a future state of never-ending existence dependent on his approbation, can impose a moment's restraint on the indulgence of human passion; and nothing can reconcile man to such restraint, but the formation of a new spirit within him, which will convert that restraint into liberty and privilege, and make the service of God his highest happiness here, as well as his only sure hope hereafter. This is the spiritual work of the gospel of the Redeemer, which has 'brought life and immortality to light,' and furnished to man a motive and a spring of action, which enables him to tread the earth and its vile pursuits beneath his feet, in contemplation of the immortality to which he is hastening."

Is it your ambition to excel in the powers of thought and in the graces of diction? Read, then, the Scriptures: for in them, and in them only, is found truth unmixed with error; in them only is grandeur of conception, undebased by the littleness of human conceit; and in them (if I may so speak,) may be seen the very mind of God. Nothing can be imagined more elevated, more glowing, or more beautiful than the writings of the inspired penmen; of whom it has been justly said, that "their energy of language and dignity of style are equalled only by the unspeakable sublimity of the subjects which they treat." It is a cheering prospect to the christian scholar, that the learned world is awakening to the importance of this subject; and he cannot but indulge the hope that the day is not far distant, when no education will be deemed complete without a knowledge of the scriptures, and when the volume of inspiration shall be adopted in our schools as the standard of good taste and fine writing, no less than of sound morals and true religion.

But among the many motives by which our youth may be urged to the study of the word of God, this should not be overlooked, viz. that a knowledge of the sacred writings is

necessary to correct the early false impressions made upon the mind by the study of the ancient classics. Let me not, however, from this remark, be reckoned among those who, in seeking to improve the present systems of education, would entirely exclude those heathen writings from the place which long prescription has assigned them in a liberal course of education. My only aim, in adverting to this subject, is to guard the unwary mind against any erroneous ideas on the subject of religion and morals which it is likely to imbibe from resorting so early and so frequently to the sometimes impure fountains of antiquity. Our youth at school are taught to read the deeds of Pagan heroes before they are competent to separate what is praiseworthy from what is vile in their characters; and it too often happens, that to read is to admire, and to admire is to emulate. Thus some idol of false honour is set up and consecrated, an erroneous standard of morals is established, public applause becomes the chief incentive to virtue, resentment is ennobled, and pride, and many other hateful passions, erected into honourable virtues. Curiosity in these things is apt to beget veneration; daily familiarity strengthens first impressions; the moral taste becomes vitiated; and the almost certain consequence is a disrelish for the sober and blessed realities of the Christian faith. Thus, whilst we are learning from the sages of ancient times, the beauties of imagery, the graces of diction, the arts of eloquence, and the harmony of numbers, we need some sage Mentor at hand to warn us continually against their principles, which insensibly steal in upon us through the fascinating influences of poetry and oratory. Eminent scholars have confessed and lamented the ill effects experienced in themselves, by a too close attention to their classical engagements. They have, in this way, lost their relish for theological study, become puffed up with the vanity of conscious erudition, and, before they were aware of it, acquired so debauched a mind as to become first neglecters, then despisers and opposers of the

religion of Christ. If such be the effect of these studies on the mature and well disciplined student, may we not tremble for their demoralizing influence on the plastic and incautious mind of youth? and need we wonder at the school-boy who asked his play-fellow, "which was the greater, Jupiter or God Almighty?" These are considerations which should be ever present with parents and teachers of youth, in order that, by a timely instruction in the word of God, by "line upon line and precept upon precept," at the maternal knee, and in the earlier stages of education, they may forestal this threatened evil, and protect their youthful charge against the inroads of false principles, at that critical period of life when the mind may be moulded into almost any form.

But I will detain you no longer. My young friends, I thank you, and this respected audience, for your patient attention, and regret that I have been able to repay it by no better offering. If, however, what has been said shall tend, in the least degree, to excite in your breasts an increased sense of God's goodness to us as a people; if it shall inspire you with more exalted notions of the religion of Christ; enable you to make a more correct estimate of true happiness; or suggest to you juster views of your duty as citizens of this favoured republic; I shall feel as if I had not spoken altogether in vain. Let me once more entreat you then, as you value your best interests, to study diligently that volume which contains the secret of your happiness. The truths which it reveals once dwelt, undivulged, in the bosom of God. Its every sentence is charmed with the divine presence, and is powerful to the saving of the soul. Its doctrines are of everlasting interest, and its precepts duly revered would liken us unto God himself. All the great objects of this world's history lose their value through the lapse of time; but the words of that book are co-existent with the immortality of our nature. While we are discussing the events of the day, they cease to be; while we are adopting fashions,

they become obsolete; while defending or condemning parties, they change sides; while contemplating opposing factions, they are extinct. Of all created things, mutability and vanity are written on the best estate, and brief is their duration at the longest. But "the word of the Lord endureth for ever, and his memorial to all generations." Remember that this life, which is now opening upon you in all its flattering prospects, is nothing more than the seed-time of eternity; and that there is a day at hand when the proudest efforts of unsanctified genius, and the brightest accomplishments of polished life, will avail you nothing; when a single tear, shed for sin over the page of eternal truth, shall leave behind it a more blessed memory, and ensure a brighter reversion above, than the wisdom of a Socrates, combined with the wealth of a Cræsus and the renown of a Napoleon. "*In hoc vinces*" is inscribed on the word of God, and on it alone. In vain will you seek for success under any other banner.

"Beware what earth calls happiness; beware
 All joys but joys that never can expire.
 In vain we seek a heaven below the sky;
 The world has false but flattering charms:
 Its distant joys show big in our esteem,
 But lessen still as they draw near the eye.
 In our embrace the visions die;
 And when we grasp the airy forms,
 We lose the pleasing dream."

MR. GASTON'S ADDRESS

Delivered before the Philanthropic and Dialectic Societies at Chapel-Hill,
on the 20th of June, 1832.

Gentlemen of the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies :

When I look around on this extraordinary concourse of visitors, I cannot but feel that expectation has been too highly excited, and cannot but anticipate and regret the disappointment which it must necessarily meet with. Aware of the value which is here set upon the ceremony of the annual address ; knowing that the friends of the University throughout the State, regard it as calculated not only to excite a spirit of emulation among the Students, but to attract the public attention to the Institution itself ; and warmly attached to that noble cause, for the advancement of which, these edifices have been erected and your associations formed, I felt myself bound to accept of the invitation, in obedience to which I appear before you. Could I indeed have foreseen the unusual engagements, which added to the ordinary occupations of a busy life, have left me no leisure to prepare any thing worthy of the general expectation, I should have deemed myself at liberty to decline the call. But the discovery was not made until after my word was pledged, and it was too late to hope that the duty could be devolved on another. Compelled then to choose between an entire disappointment of your hopes, and the presenting myself to you without the advantages of full preparation, I have resolved to execute the undertaking imperfectly, rather than forego it altogether. To whatever petty mortifications the adoption of this alternative may expose me elsewhere, from you, my young friends, I am sure of a favourable reception. You will see in it an expression of the sense which I entertain of the honor conferred on me, by your choice, of my readiness to gratify your wishes, and of my solicitude to cheer you on in the noble career on which you have entered. The few homely truths which I wish to impress upon your minds, will not indeed come mended from my tongue, but I do not despair that, presented in their naked plainness, but urged with the earnestness and sincerity of friendship, they may win their way to your generous and affectionate approbation.

The authority of Shakespeare is often invoked for the position, that "there is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood leads on to fortune." Without venturing to deny altogether

the fitness of this metaphor, and fully admitting it to have enough of truth to render it appropriate to the occasion for which it was used, and the character to whom the great poet assigned it, I yet regard it as too favourable to that indolence of disposition which is always ready to imagine success in life as depending on some fortunate tide. I hold, that generally, every man is the architect of his own fortune, the author of his own greatness or insignificance, happiness or misery. True it is, that casualties, neither to be foreseen nor prevented, may defeat schemes which have been wisely concerted and vigorously prosecuted; and that success, undeserved, and perhaps unsought for, may sometimes befall the weak and slothful. These, however, are but occasional deviations from the ordinary course of nature, according to which man's energies, wisely or foolishly directed, and diligently or carelessly exerted, are made to determine his character and condition in society. The stoutest ship that was ever manned with prudent heads, brave hearts, and strong hands, has foundered in a hurricane, while the feeble bark that "owns no mastery in floating," is sometimes safely wafted into port; yet, who can deny that ordinarily the fate of the voyage must depend on the skill, care and courage with which it is conducted.

Much too, very much, either for permanent good or ill in the fate of every individual, has been found to follow almost necessarily from the habits formed, the propensities cherished or restrained, and the rules of conduct adopted at a very early period of life. We might, perhaps, be tempted to regret that such important and often awful consequences should follow on the doings of an age, when the unworn senses are alive to every impression, and the keen appetite greedy for every enjoyment; when the imagination is wild, the judgment feeble, and "heedless rambling impulse" has scarcely learned to think. Yet such is the constitution of nature, and such consequently the appointment of HIM, whose ways are always wise, benevolent and just, and whose will it were not more madness to resist, than it is impiety to question. Look through the world, and the least observant cannot fail to discover talents abused, opportunities squandered, and men ruined, because of early folly, misbehaviour or thoughtlessness; and let those who have passed through life's ordeal with safety and honor, look back on their trials, and they will acknowledge how much they owe to very early impressions, and to habits contracted almost without a sense of their use or a foresight of their consequences. He therefore, who aspires to excellence, cannot too soon propose to himself the objects which he should strive to obtain, nor fix his aim too early, or too steadily, on the end to which his efforts should be directed. The shortness of life, the large fragments of it which are

necessarily occupied by animal wants, or wasted in frivolous cares and amusements, leave, at best, but an inconsiderable portion to be devoted to intellectual cultivation and exertion. To waste this portion would be criminal improvidence, and it is of the highest moment to learn betimes how it may be most beneficially applied.

The end which an ingenuous youth naturally proposes to himself is, a faithful and honorable discharge of the duties of life. His objects are to realize the fond hopes of his parents and friends, to acquire the affection and esteem of those around him, to become the dispenser of good to his fellow-men, and thus to fulfil the purposes for which it has pleased God to place him in this world of trial and discipline. He feels that these objects are indeed good. By a moral instinct, he is propelled towards them as fit to fill his heart, kindle his aspirations and animate his exertions. Reason, as she gradually unfolds her powers and assumes dominion over him, sanctions this choice with her approbation; and Religion comes in aid of Nature and Reason, to teach him that talents are but lent to be improved, and that an account must be one day rendered, in which their use or neglect will be amply rewarded or severely punished. How much is it not to be lamented, that sloth should enervate, dissipation corrupt, or vice brutalize, this child of hope and promise. You who have him in charge, watch over him with never sleeping vigilance and affectionate solicitude. Give him a happy start, sustain him when disposed to flag, reanimate him when discouraged, check kindly his wanderings, soothe his wounded feelings, guide him with your counsels, and save him from the foes by which he is waylaid and beset.

Macte nova virtute puer sis itur ad astra.

Most faithfully, no doubt, are these duties performed by the able and excellent men who are here charged with the office of instruction. Little can be done in aid of their efforts, but to exhort and entreat all placed under their care to attend to their admonitions, treasure up their counsels, and obey their injunctions. Yet there are some errors which were prevalent when I was a boy, which I have reason to believe still prevail in public schools, and which may perhaps be better handled by an old friend than an acknowledged instructor—and to these, therefore, I would for a few moments request the favorable attention of the younger portion of my hearers.

Vigorous, diligent and persevering application is essential to the attainment of excellence in every pursuit of man. It is undoubtedly a mistake to suppose, that there is no original inequality in the mental faculties of different individuals. Probably, there is as great a disparity in their intellectual, as in their physical conformation. But however false this extravagant theory may be, there

is another error far more common, and practically, far more mischievous—the error of exaggerating the difference between the original energies of intellect, and of attributing to splendid and resistless genius those victories which are not to be achieved but by well directed and continued industry. It is in the infancy of life, that the inequalities of original talent are most striking, and it is not strange, that vanity on the one hand, and indolent admiration on the other, should hyperbolically extol these obvious advantages. In what this disparity consists, it may not be easy to state with precision. But from an observation of many years, I venture to suggest, that the chief natural superiority manifested by the favored few over their competitors in the intellectual conflict, is to be found in the facility with which their attention is directed and confined to its proper subjects. That youth may be regarded as fortunate indeed, who in early life can restrain his wandering thoughts and tie down his mind at will, to the contemplation of whatever he wishes to comprehend and to make his own. A few moments of this concentrated application, is worth days and weeks of a vague, interrupted, scattered attention. The first resembles the well known manœuvre in Strategy, so simple in its conception and yet so astonishing in its results, by which all the arms of a military force are made to bear upon a given point at the same moment. Every thing here tells, because there is no power wasted, and none misapplied. Now let no one despair, because he finds this effort to confine his attention difficult, or for a considerable length of time, impracticable. Nothing is more certain, than that this power over the mind may be acquired. Let the attempt be repeated again and again—first for short, afterwards, as the ability is increased, for longer periods, and success will ultimately follow.—The habit of fixed attention will thus be created, and it is one of the peculiarities of all active habits, that in proportion to the difficulty with which they were produced, is their inveteracy, when once thoroughly formed. Thus it not unfrequently happens, that the advantages with which the individual commenced his career, who was naturally alert and devoted in his attention to every subject, as it was successively presented to his notice, have not enabled him to contend successfully with him, who, by hard efforts, has chained down his wandering thoughts and dissipated faculties to the habit of attention. Among the best results which attend a course of regular academical education, is this exclusive and concentrated direction of the mental powers to their appropriate objects. In the years employed principally in the study of the learned languages, the necessity of finding out the meaning of each word, and discerning either the agreement between different words, or the dependance of some of them upon others in certain

grammatical relations, necessarily sharpens and fixes the attention. After this preparatory discipline of the intellect, the Student is introduced to the study of mathematical science, where proposition leads on to proposition in regular order, and his attention is necessarily enchained to each truth, as it follows, with logical certainty, from truths previously demonstrated. He is then initiated into the mysterious laws of Natural Philosophy, as they have been discovered, explained and illustrated by a course of rigorous induction, and is ultimately familiarized with the yet nobler and more sublime investigations of moral science, the refinements of taste, the beauties of eloquence and the charms of heavenly poesy. And this admirable training, is conducted remote from the bustle and cares of the world, in the very hush of the passions, and beyond the reach of beguiling and distracting pleasures. Here surely, then, the understanding is disciplined, its discrimination rendered more acute, its general health and vigor confirmed, while a facility is created for directing its powers to the various manly and trying services which may await it, in life's busy theatre.—But not unfrequently is the question asked by querulous Students, why all this devoted attention to the dead languages, to mathematical theorems, philosophical experiments, metaphysical disquisitions and critical subtleties? In the world, no one talks Greek or Latin, and at the forum, or in the Legislative hall, we shall not be called upon to demonstrate the propositions of Euclid, or explain the phenomena of hydrostatics and optics. The motives of human action are better learned in that great practical school, the world, than by poring over the theories of metaphysicians; and all the rules of Quinctillian, Rollin or Blair, will never make a powerful reasoner or an eloquent orator. Why, then, shall we consume our nights and days in the acquisition of that which is to be of no practical utility hereafter, and which brings with it no immediate advantage, except the gratification of pride, a short-lived honor, a distinction at Commencement? Beware, my young friends, beware of the tempter. These are the suggestions of Sloth—the most insidious, persuasive and dangerous of deceivers.

“*Vitanda est improba syren Desidia.*”

If you cannot close your ears against her insinuations, strengthen your understandings to triumph over her sophisms, and nerve your courage to resist her wiles. Be sure, if you submit to her benumbing influence, and waste your days here in idleness, the time will come, when with bitter, but perhaps unavailing anguish, you shall bemoan your folly. Remember, that it is not designed by an academical education, to teach you all that it behoves you to learn—Education is not completed within these walls. When you shall

have quitted this peaceful retreat, and selected the profession or state in life in which you are to be engaged, then you should apply all your efforts to the acquisition of that species of knowledge which is more especially needed. Here are inculcated those elementary principles of science and literature, which experience has shewn to be best fitted to form the foundation of the character of the scholar and gentleman—those rudiments of instruction, which omitted here, are rarely indeed acquired afterwards. Here are to be formed those habits of vigorous and continuous application—here, the capacities for improvement are to be cultivated and strengthened, so that every occasion and every employment without these walls may become subsidiary to further advancement in knowledge, ability and usefulness. It is a miserable fallacy, to mistake the exception for the rule. True it is, that those who have won the highest honours at College, do not always realize the hopes which these glorious beginnings have excited. “The fair bloom of fairest fruit” may be blasted by pestilent dews. Folly, vanity and vice, low pursuits and vulgar associations, indolence, intemperance and debauchery, but too often debase and destroy the generous youth who entered on life’s career, rich in academical distinctions, docile, ardent for fame, patient of labour, of manly purpose and noblest promise. Mourn over these moral wrecks. Lament the instability of all earthly good, the frail character of all human excellence. Weep for those who have fallen from their high estate, but say not it was folly in them thus to have risen. True it is also, that it sometimes, though very rarely happens, that those who have been idle during their academical course, have, by extraordinary exertions, retrieved their early neglect, and in the end, outstripped others who started in the race far ahead. These are the exceptions—they furnish cause to humble arrogance, check presumption, banish despair, and encourage reformation. But so surely as a virtuous life usually precedes a happy death, so surely it will be found, that within the College precincts, is laid the groundwork of that pre-eminence afterward acquired in the strife of men, and that College distinctions are not only good testimony of the fidelity with which College duties have been performed, but the best presages and pledges of excellence on a more elevated and extensive field of action. In defiance, therefore, of all the lures of pleasure, and seductive suggestions of sloth, let active, persevering industry; be the habit of your lives. Form this habit here, and cherish and preserve it ever afterwards.

But however earnestly you are thus exhorted to diligence, let it not be forgotten, that diligence itself is but a subordinate quality, and derives its chief value from the end to which it is directed, and the motives by which it is impelled. It is diligence in a good

cause only that is commendable. The first great maxim of human conduct, that which it is all-important to impress on the understandings of young men, and recommend to their hearty adoption, is, above all things, in all circumstances, and under every emergency, to preserve a clean heart and an honest purpose. Integrity, firm, determined integrity, is that quality, which of all others, raises man to the highest dignity of his nature, and fits him to adorn and bless the sphere in which he is appointed to move. Without it, neither genius nor learning, neither the gifts of God, nor human exertions, can avail aught for the accomplishment of the great objects of human existence. Integrity is the crowning virtue—integrity is the pervading principle which ought to regulate, guide, control and vivify every impulse, desire and action. Honesty is sometimes spoken of as a vulgar virtue; and perhaps that honesty, which barely refrains from outraging the positive rules ordained by society for the protection of property, and which ordinarily pays its debts and performs its engagements, however useful and commendable a quality, is not to be numbered among the highest efforts of human virtue. But that integrity which, however tempting the opportunity, or however secure against detection, no selfishness nor resentment, no lust of power, place, favour, profit or pleasure, can cause to swerve from the strict rule of right, is the perfection of man's moral nature. In this sense, the poet was right, when he pronounced "an honest man the noblest work of God." It is almost inconceivable what an erect and independent spirit this high endowment communicates to the man, and what a moral intrepidity and vivifying energy it imparts to his character. There is a family alliance between all the virtues, and perfect integrity is always followed by a train of goodly qualities, frankness, benevolence, humanity, patriotism, promptness to act, and patience to endure. In moments of public need, these indicate the man who is worthy of universal confidence. Erected on such a basis, and built up of such materials, fame is enduring. Such is the fame of our WASHINGTON, of the man "inflexible to ill and obstinately just." While, therefore, other monuments, intended to perpetuate human greatness, are daily mouldering into dust, and belie the proud inscriptions which they bear, the solid granite pyramid of his glory lasts from age to age, imperishable, seen afar off, looming high over the vast desert, a mark, a sign and a wonder, for the way-farers through this pilgrimage of life.

A nice sense of integrity cannot, therefore, be too early cherished, or too sedulously cultivated. In the very dawns of life, occasions are presented for its exercise. Within these walls, temptations every day occur, where temporary advantage solicits a deviation from the rule of right. In the discharge of the various

duties which you owe to your companions, let no petty selfishness be indulged, no artifices practised, by which you are to escape from your fair share of labour, inconvenience or contribution, or any one deprived of the full measure of whatever he may rightfully claim. Cultivate singleness of purpose and frankness of demeanor, and hold in contempt whatever is sordid, disingenuous, cunning or mean. But it is when these peaceful shades shall have been left behind, and the fitful course of busy life begun, that seductions will be presented under every form by which inexperience, infirmity of purpose, and facility of disposition, can be waylaid. Then is the crisis of the young man's fate—then is the time to take his stand, to seize his vantage ground. If he can then defy the allurements of cupidity, sensuality and ambition, the laugh of fools, the arts of parasites, and the contagion of improbity; then indeed, may he hope,

“ In sight of mortal and immortal powers,
 “ As in a boundless theatre to run
 “ The great career of justice—
 “ And through the mists of passion and of sense,
 “ And through the tossing tide of chance and pain
 “ To hold his course unfaltering.”

You, my young friends, who are standing at the threshold, and waiting with eager impatience the signal for entrance upon life, must not think that I mean to alarm you with idle fears, because I thus warn you of the approaching conflict. The enraged bull may close his eyes before he rushes upon his foe, but rational courage, calmly surveys danger, and then deliberately prepares and determines to encounter it. Apprized of your peril, and armed for the encounter, enter on your course with resolved hearts, and fear not for the issue.

So sweet are the notes of human praise, and so abhorrent the tones of reproach, that it is among the highest efforts of magnanimity to pursue the straight forward course of duty without being turned aside by commendation or reproof, by flattery or calumny. Whatever be our journey through life, like the princes in the Eastern tale ascending the mountain in search of the wondrous bird, we are sure to hear around us the confused sounds of blandishment and solicitation, of menace and insult, until with many of us, the giddy head is turned, and we are converted into monuments of warning to those who are to follow us in life's adventure. Rare indeed is that moral courage, which, like the prudent Parisade, closes its ears against the impression of these sounds, and casts not an eye behind until its destined course be accomplished. Rare, however, as may be this excellence, and in its perfection perhaps

unattainable, there can be no true dignity and decision of character without a near approach to it. Let youth be ever modest ever deferential to the counsels, the suggestions and the claims of others. But in matters of right and wrong, whatever be the lures, the taunts, or the usages of the world, or whatever the supposed inconveniences of singularity, let judgment and conscience always rule with absolute sway. Carry this maxim with you through life, whatever be the station you are to occupy, or the business you are to pursue; and carry with it another kindred maxim, rely for success in your undertakings, not on the patronage of others, but on your own capacity, resolution, diligence and exertions. Rise by merit, or rise not at all. Suited as these injunctions are believed to be to all, they are peculiarly addressed to those among you, who, panting for renown, are resolved to enter upon a public career, and long "to read their history in a nation's eyes."

"How wretched," exclaims the Poet of Nature, "is that poor man who hangs on Princes' favours." Miserable is the condition of every being who hangs on the favours of creatures like himself. Deserve, and strive by desert, to win the esteem of your fellow-men. Thus acquired, it decorates him who obtains, and blesses those who bestow it. To them, it is returned in faithful service, and to him, it comes in aid of the approbation of conscience to animate diligence and reward exertion. Those too, who engage in public service, are bound to cherish a hearty sympathy with the wants, feelings, comforts and wishes of the people whose welfare is committed to their charge. It is essential for the preservation of that confidence which ought to subsist between the principal and the agent, the constituent and the representative, that all haughtiness and reserve should be banished from their intercourse. It sometimes happens, that he who has lived too constantly among books, manifests a disgust in an association with the uneducated and unrefined, which mortifies and repels them. This is absurd in him, and unjust to them. It is absurd, for he ought to know, and know well, those for whom, and upon whom, he expects to act—they constitute, in fact, one of the first and most appropriate objects of his study; and it is unjust, for not unfrequently, under this roughness which shocks the man of books, is to be found a stock of practical information, in which he is miserably deficient. Banish, then, all superciliousness, for it is criminal and ridiculous. Honestly seek to serve your country, for it is glorious to advance the good of your fellow-men, and thus, as far as feeble mortals may, act up to the great example of HIM to whose image and likeness you are made. Seek also, by all honest arts, to win their confidence, but beware how you ever prefer their favour to their service. The high road of service is indeed laborious, exposed to the

rain and sun, the heat and dust : while the by-path of favour has, apparently, at first, much the same direction, and is bordered with flowers and sheltered by trees, “ cooled with fountains and murmuring with water-falls.” No wonder, then, that like the son of Abensina, in Johnson’s beautiful Apologue, the young adventurer is tempted to try the happy experiment of uniting pleasure with business, and gaining the rewards of diligence without suffering its fatigues. But once entered upon, the path of favour, though found to decline more and more from its first direction, is pursued through all its deviations, till at length, even the thought of return to the road of service is utterly abandoned. To court the fondness of the people, is found, or supposed to be, easier than to merit their approbation. Meanly ambitious of public trust, without the virtues to deserve it : intent on personal distinction, and having forgotten the ends for which alone it is worth possessing, the miserable being concentrated all in self, learns to pander to every vulgar prejudice, to advocate every popular error, to chime in with every dominant party, to fawn, flatter and deceive, and becomes a demagogue. How wretched is that poor being who hangs on the people’s favour ! All manliness of principle has been lost in this long course of meanness ; he dare not use his temporary popularity for any purposes of public good, in which there may be a hazard of forfeiting it ; and the very eminence to which he is exalted, renders but more conspicuous his servility and degradation. However clear the convictions of his judgment, however strong the admonitions of his, as yet, not thoroughly stifled conscience, not these, not the law of God, nor the rule of right, nor the public good—but the caprice of his constituents, must be his only guide. Having risen by artifice, and conscious of no worth to support him, he is in hourly dread of being supplanted in the favour of the deluded multitude by some more cunning deceiver. And such, sooner or later, is sure to be his fate. At some unlucky moment, when he bears his blushing honours thick upon him, (and well may such honours blush !) he is jirked from his elevation by some more dexterous demagogue, and falls unpitied, never to rise again. And can this be the lot of him who has been here trained to admire and love high-minded excellence—who has been taught by high classical authority to regard with the same fearless and immovable indifference, the stern countenance of the tyrant and the wicked ardour of the multitude, and who has learned from a yet higher and holier authority, to hold fast on “ whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, to abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good ?” Believe me, however, this is no fancy picture. The original may be found in the world every day. Nor will it surprize those who have had occasion to

see how the vain heart is swoln, and the giddy head turned, how honesty of purpose and manliness of spirit, are perverted by popular applause. It is but the first step that costs. Once yield to the suggestion, that a little deceit or prevarication, a slight sacrifice of principle and independence, a compromise of conscience in matters not absolutely fundamental, may be excused, when the immediate gain is obvious and the end in view important, and the downward path becomes every day more and more smooth, until, in its descent, it reach the very abyss of vulgar, trading, intriguing, electioneering, office-hunting politicians. If in this lowest depth, a lower deep can be found, none of us, I am sure, have the curiosity to explore it.

But is Integrity sure to meet here its merited reward? Unquestionably not. If it were, and the fact generally known, there would scarcely be room for choice, and men would be honest from the want of a plausible temptation to be otherwise. But it is not too much to say, that, in general, Integrity has a tendency to promote the interest of him who pursues it, and it is therefore recommended to our adoption by prudence, not less than by principle. Success in the acquisition of any extrinsic object is necessarily uncertain, since it depends on contingencies which cannot be foreseen, and which if foreseen, are frequently beyond our power. It is not in mortals to command success. No talent, no courage, no industry, and no address, can be certain to effect it. But when it is attempted by cunning, disingenuous means, it is usually rendered more difficult of attainment, because of the complexity of the scheme, and the risk of detection and counteraction. Honesty, in the long run, is therefore the surer policy. It is impossible to thrive without the reputation of it, and it is far easier to be honest indeed, than to cheat the world into the belief of integrity, where it is not. The crooked stratagems, the arts, toils, concealments and self-denials, which are necessary to carry on a successful imposition, are far more onerous and painful, than all the duties which a life of probity enjoins; while the consciousness of an upright deportment, diffuses through the whole man, that security and serenity which infinitely outweigh all the advantages of successful cunning. Nor in recommending a spirit of Independence, is it intended to proscribe the acceptance of friendly aid, freely tendered, and won by no mean solicitation. Children of the same common family, we are bound to help each other in the trials and difficulties of our common pilgrimage, nor should we ever be too proud to receive from others that assistance, which it is our duty to render to them. Now such aid, is not only more likely to be bestowed, but comes with far greater effect, when there has been a manly and sustained effort to do without it. The spindling plant

which has always been supported by a prop, is not only unable to stand alone, but can scarcely be sustained by props when the season of fruit arrives : whereas, the slightest assistance then bestowed on the hardy tree, that self-sustained has always braved the breeze, will enable it to bear up under the heaviest and richest burthen. He who trusts to others, must necessarily be often disappointed, and the habit of dependence creates a helplessness which is almost incapable of exertion. Fancy dwells on expected aid, until it mistakes its own creations for realities, and the child of illusion wastes life in miserable day-dreams, unable to act for himself, and confidently relying on assistance which he is destined never to receive.

Deeply rooted principles of probity, confirmed habits of industry, and a determination to rely on one's own exertion, constitute then the great preparation for the discharge of the duties of man, and the best security for performing them with honor to one's self and benefit to others. But it may be asked, what is there in such a life of never ending toil, effort and privation, to recommend it to the acceptance of the young and the gay ? Those who aspire to heroic renown, may indeed make up their minds to embrace these "hard doctrines:" but it may be well questioned, whether happiness is not preferable to greatness, and enjoyment more desirable than distinction. Let others, if they will, toil up "the steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar," we choose rather to sport in luxurious ease and careless glee in the valley below. It is, indeed, on those who aspire to eminence, that these injunctions are intended to be pressed with the greatest emphasis, not only because a failure in them would be more disastrous than in others, but because they are exposed to greater and more numerous dangers of error. But it is a sad mistake to suppose that they are not suited to all, and are not earnestly urged upon all, however humble their pretensions or moderate their views. Happiness, as well as greatness, enjoyment as well as renown, have no friends so sure as Integrity, Diligence and Independence. We are not placed here to waste our days in wanton riot or inglorious ease, with appetites perpetually gratified and never palled, exempted from all care and solicitude, with life ever fresh, and joys ever new. He who has fitted us for our condition, and assigned to us its appropriate duties, has not left his work unfinished, and omitted to provide a penalty for the neglect of our obligations. Labour is not more the duty, than the blessing of man. Without it, there is neither mental nor physical vigour, health, cheerfulness nor animation ; neither the eagerness of hope, nor the capacity to enjoy. Every human being must have some object to engage his attention, excite his wishes, and rouse him to action, or he sinks, a prey to listless-

ness. For want of proper occupations, see strenuous idleness resorting to a thousand expedients—the race-course, the bottle or the gaming-table, the frivolities of fashion, the debasements of sensuality, the petty contentions of envy, the grovelling pursuits of avarice, and all the various distracting agitations of vice. Call you these enjoyments? Is such the happiness which it is so dreadful to forego?

“Vast happiness enjoy thy gay allies!

“A youth of follies, an old age of cares,

“Young yet enervate, old yet never wise;

“Vice wastes their vigor and their mind impairs.

“Vain, idle, dissolute, in thoughtless ease,

“Reserving woes for age, their prime they spend;

“All wretched, hopeless to the evil days,

“With sorrow to the verge of life they tend;

“Grieved with the present, of the past ashamed;

“They live and are despised, they die, no more are named.”

If to every bounty of Providence there be annexed, as assuredly there is, some obligation as a condition for its enjoyment: on us, blest as we have been, and as we now are, with the choicest gifts of Heaven here below—with freedom, peace, order, civilization and social virtue—then are unquestionably imposed weighty obligations. You whom I now address, will, in a few years, be among the men of the succeeding age. In a country like ours, where the public will is wholly unfettered, and every man is a component part of that country, there is no individual so humble who has not duties of a public kind to discharge. His views and actions have an influence on those of others, and his opinions, with theirs, serve to make up that public will. More especially is this the case with those who, whatever may be their pursuits in life, have been raised by education to a comparative superiority in intellectual vigor and attainments. On you, and such as you, depends the fate of the most precious heritage ever won by the valor, or preserved by the prudence, or consecrated by the virtue of an illustrious ancestry—illustrious, not because of factitious titles, but nature's nobles, wise, good, generous and brave! To you, and such as you, will be confided in deposit, the institutions of our renowned and beloved country. Receive them with awe, cherish them with loyalty, and transmit them whole, and if possible, improved to your children. Yours will, indeed, be no sinecure office. As the public will is the operative spring of all public action, it will be your duty to make and to keep the public will enlightened. There will always be some error to dispel, some prejudice to correct, some illusion to guard against, some imposition to detect and expose. In aid of these individual efforts, you must provide, by public institutions, for dif-

fusing among the people, that general information without which they cannot be protected from the machinations of deceivers. As your country grows in years, you must also cause it to grow in science, literature, arts and refinement. It will be for you to develope and multiply its resources, to check the faults of manners as they rise, and to advance the cause of industry, temperance, moderation, justice, morals and religion, all around you. On you too, will devolve the duty which has been too long neglected, but which cannot with impunity be neglected much longer, of providing for the mitigation, and (is it too much to hope for in North-Carolina?) for the ultimate extirpation of the worst evil that afflicts the Southern part of our Confederacy. Full well do you know to what I refer, for on this subject there is, with all of us, a morbid sensitiveness, which gives warning even of an approach to it. Disguise the truth as we may, and throw the blame where we will, it is Slavery which, more than any other cause, keeps us back in the career of improvement. It stifles industry and represses enterprize—it is fatal to economy and providence—it discourages skill—impairs our strength as a community, and poisons morals at the fountain head. How this evil is to be encountered, how subdued, is indeed a difficult and delicate enquiry, which this is not the time to examine, nor the occasion to discuss. I felt, however, that I could not discharge my duty, without referring to this subject, as one which ought to engage the prudence, moderation and firmness of those who, sooner or later, must act decisively upon it.

I would not depress your buoyant spirits with gloomy anticipations, but I should be wanting in frankness, if I did not state my conviction that you will be called to the performance of other duties unusually grave and important. Perils surround you and are imminent, which will require clear heads, pure intentions, and stout hearts, to discern and to overcome. There is no side on which danger may not make its approach, but from the wickedness and madness of factions, it is most menacing. Time was, indeed, when factions contended amongst us with virulence and fury: but they were, or affected to be, at issue on questions of principle; now, Americans band together under the names of men, and wear the livery, and put on the badges of their leaders. Then, the individuals of the different parties were found side by side, dispersed throughout the various districts of our confederated Republic; but now, the parties that distract the land, are almost identified with our geographical distinctions. Now, there has come that period, foreseen and dreaded by our WASHINGTON, by him “who, more than any other individual, founded this our wide-spreading Empire, and gave to our western world independence and freedom”—by him, who with a father’s warning-voice, bade us beware of

“parties founded on geographical discriminations.” As yet, the sentiment so deeply planted in the hearts of our honest yeomanry, that union is strength, has not been uprooted. As yet, they acknowledge the truth, and feel the force of the homely, but excellent aphorism, “United we stand, divided we fall.” As yet, they take pride in the name of “the United States”—in recollection of the fields that were won, the blood which was poured forth, and the glory which was gained in the common cause, and under the common banner of a united country. May God, in his mercy, forbid that I, or you, my friends, should live to see the day, when these sentiments and feelings shall be extinct! Whenever that day comes, then is the hour at hand, when this glorious Republic, this at once national and confederated Republic, which for nearly half a century has presented to the eyes, the hopes and the gratitude of man, a more brilliant and lovely image than Plato, or More, or Harrington, ever feigned or fancied, shall be like a tale that is told, like a vision that hath passed away. But these sentiments and feelings are necessarily weakened, and in the end must be destroyed, unless the moderate, the good and the wise united, “frown indignantly upon the first dawnings of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together its various parts.” Threats of resistance, secession, separation—have become common as household words, in the wicked and silly violence of public declaimers. The public ear is familiarized, and the public mind will soon be accustomed, to the detestable suggestion of **DISUNION**! Calculations and conjectures, what may the East do without the South, and what may the South do without the East, sneers, menaces, reproaches, and recriminations, all tend to the same fatal end! What can the East do without the South? What can the South do without the East? They may do much; they may exhibit to the curiosity of political anatomists, and the pity and wonder of the world, the “*dissecta membra*,” the sundered bleeding limbs of a once gigantic body instinct with life and strength and vigor. They can furnish to the philosophic historian, another melancholy and striking instance of the political axiom, that all Republican confederacies have an inherent and unavoidable tendency to dissolution. They will present fields and occasions for border wars, for leagues and counter-leagues, for the intrigues of petty statesmen, the struggles of military chiefs, for confiscations, insurrections, and deeds of darkest hue. They will gladden the hearts of those who have proclaimed, that men are not fit to govern themselves, and shed a disastrous eclipse on the hopes of rational freedom throughout the world. Solon, in his Code, proposed no punishment for parricide, treating it as an impossible crime. Such, with us, ought to be the crime of political parricide

—the dismemberment of our “father-land.” *“Carisunt parentes, carisunt liberi, propinqui, familiares, sed omnes omnium caritates patria una complexa est; pro qua quis bonus dubitet mortem appetere si ei sit profuturus? Quo est detestabilior istorum immanitas qui lacerarunt scelere patriam, et in ea funditus delenda occupati et sunt et fuerunt.”*

If it must be so, let parties and party men continue to quarrel with little or no regard to the public good. They may mystify themselves and others with disputations on political economy, proving the most opposite doctrines to their own satisfaction, and perhaps, to the conviction of no one else on earth. They may deserve reprobation for their selfishness, their violence, their errors, or their wickedness. They may do our country much harm. They may retard its growth, destroy its harmony, impair its character, render its institutions unstable, pervert the public mind, and deprave the public morals. These are, indeed, evils, and sore evils, but the principle of life remains, and will yet struggle with assured success, over these temporary maladies. Still we are great, glorious, united and free; still we have a name that is revered abroad and loved at home—a name which is a tower of strength to us against foreign wrong, and a bond of internal union and harmony—a name, which no enemy pronounces but with respect, and which no citizen hears, but with a throb of exultation. Still we have that blessed Constitution, which, with all its pretended defects, and all its alleged violations, has conferred more benefit on man, than ever yet flowed from any other human institution—which has established justice, insured domestic tranquillity, provided for the common defence, promoted the general welfare, and which, under God, if we be true to ourselves, will insure the blessings of Liberty to us and our posterity.

Surely, such a Country, and such a Constitution, have claims upon you, my friends, which cannot be disregarded. I entreat and adjure you then, by all that is near and dear to you on earth, by all the obligations of Patriotism, by the memory of your fathers, who fell in the great and glorious struggle, for the sake of your sons whom you would not have to blush for your degeneracy, by all your proud recollections of the past, and all your fond anticipations of the future renown of our nation—preserve that Country, uphold that Constitution. Resolve, that they shall not be lost while in your keeping, and may God Almighty strengthen you to perform that vow!



